

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS**

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 1. This sheet, which includes Figs. 1 and 2, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 1 and 2. In Figure 1, previously omitted stopping means 52 has been added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)  
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-3 are present in this application. By this Amendment, the Abstract, the specification, the drawings and claims 1-3 have been amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicant extends his appreciation to Examiner Gordon for his courtesy in conducting the interview with Applicant's representative on July 19, 2007. During the interview, Applicant's representative discussed the objection to the Amendment filed February 26, 2007 with regard to new matter. Applicant proposed alternatives for obviating this objection. It was determined that the described "stopping means" and "stopping mechanism" would be returned to the specification, and a schematic illustration via a box or the like would be added to Fig. 1. Examiner Gordon agreed that this action would obviate the new matter objection.

Applicant's representative also discussed the Examiner's comments in paragraph 1 of the Office Action with regard to structural recitations in the claims. Applicant's representative agreed to more clearly define the structural features of the system.

With reference to the Office Action, the Amendment filed February 26, 2006 was objected to under 35 U.S.C. §132(a), and claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Without conceding this objection and rejection, the stopping means/mechanism has been returned to the specification and claims. Fig. 1 has been amended to include a schematic illustration of the described stopping means/mechanism. Withdrawal of the objection and rejection is respectfully requested.

With regard to the rejections over prior art, the rejections in paragraphs 2-5 are repeated from the Office Action dated November 24, 2006. In view of the fact that the claims have been amended to more positively define structural features of the invention, Applicant submits that the

arguments in the Amendment filed February 26, 2007 are now more commensurate in scope with that of the claims. The February 26 arguments are thus hereby incorporated by reference.

Moreover, the arguments are equally applicable with respect to the subject matter of claim 3, and Applicant submits that claim 3 is allowable for at least the reasons discussed in connection with claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are thus respectfully requested.

In paragraph 6, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,627,446 to Roach et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Roach discloses a robotic microchannel bioanalytical instrument wherein a substrate with a plurality of microchannels is movably deployed with other movable objects that loads a sample into the microchannels, stimulates molecular migration, reads the results of the migration, removes and replaces the substrate, and prepares for a new run. The disclosed "microchannels" form part of a microchip, and Roach thus lacks at least the claimed master specimen container containing a specimen and the required number of empty slave specimen containers. Additionally, Roach lacks the plurality of conveyor lanes as claimed. Rather, the apparatus in Roach utilizes tracks, 20, 30 with a gantry 33 spanning the tracks.

Applicant thus respectfully submits that the rejection is misplaced. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

ITOH  
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Respectfully submitted,

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